



2025 RABBIT & CAVY PROJECT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES



Species Chair:

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IMPORTANT DATES & INFO				
Registration Due	May 5, 2025			
MARKET CLASS	POSSESSION DATE	AGE AT FAIR	MINIMUM WEIGHT (per rabbit)	MAXIMUM WEIGHT (per rabbit)
Meat Pen (3)	May 1st	Bred: April 24 Birth: May 26 Max Age: 70 days	3.5 lbs.	5.5 lbs.
Single Fryer	May 1st	Bred: April 24 Birth: May 26 Max Age: 70 days	3.5 lbs.	5.5 lbs.
Single Roaster	April 17th	Bred: January 3 Birth: February 3	5 lbs.	8 lbs.
Record Book (Market & Show Only)	Required Due: 9/8/2025		Thank You Note	Required Due: 10/6/25

Participating 4-H youth must abide by all general rules and regulations listed in the Northwest Michigan 4-H Livestock Council's Policies & Procedures books and the Premium Book of the Northwestern Michigan Fair. This includes, but is not limited to, Code of Conducts, registration deadlines, showmanship and market requirements, record book and thank you letter requirements, etc.

Registration Requirements

- To participate in a 4-H rabbit or cavy project, youth must attain the age of eight (8) or older by January 1st of that calendar year and be registered with 4-H Online 2.0
 - Members that are 5-7 years of age will participate in the 4-H Cloverbud program and will have their own Cloverbud classes.
- All rabbit and cavy program participants (Market, Show Only, and Cloverbuds) MUST complete the online registration via the Northwest Michigan 4-H Livestock Council's website NO LATER THAN 11:59p.m. of the first Monday of May.
- To participate in the 4-H Livestock shows and auction at the Fair, youth must follow all registration requirements listed in the Northwest Michigan Fair's Premium Book.
- To participate in the 4-H Livestock auction at Fair, youth must register and complete in the appropriate 4-H Showmanship AND Market classes.

- Market rabbits that do not make weight may participate in a 4-H breed class.

Animal Requirements

- All animals must be selected and tattooed (rabbits) or tagged (cavy) before June 30th
 - Species chair will schedule a time and location for tattooing
 - No animal will be tagged or tattooed while at Fair.
- Market Rabbit Project Requirements:
 - Must be a purebred meat breed (American, Californian, Satin, New Zealand, etc)
 - Bred doe(s) must be in possession by the dates listed above.
 - For pen of 3, bred doe(s) must be all the same breed and color
 - It is recommended to have a couple of back up does
 - Types of Market Projects:
 - ❖ Meat Pen:
 - Pen of three (3) rabbits
 - Same sex preferred
 - Age: 70 days maximum at Fair
 - Weight at Fair: 3.5 to 5.5 lbs. each
 - ❖ Single Fryer:
 - One (1) Rabbit
 - Any Sex
 - Age: 70 days maximum at Fair
 - Weight at Fair: 3.5 to 5.5 lbs. each
 - ❖ Single Roaster:
 - One (1) Rabbit
 - Any Sex
 - Age: 6 months maximum at Fair
 - Weight at Fair: 5 to 8 lbs.
- Show Animal (Rabbit or Cavy) Requirements:
 - Must be at least 8 weeks of age at Fair
 - Younger kits/pups do not do well in the busy Fair setting
 - Must meet weight guidelines for their breed
 - Show only rabbits may be of mixed breeding. If they are mixed breed, they can not participate in a breed class. They will be showmanship animals only.

Fair Week Requirements

- General Requirements:
 - Check-in/Weigh-in takes place the first Saturday of Fair.
 - Youth must be present or must have made prior arrangements with the species chair for someone else to check in their animal.
 - Once an animal enters the check-in area it may only leave when it has been cleared to enter the barn or if it is going home.
 - Refer to the Animal Health Check-In policies for the Northwestern Michigan Fair.
 - Rabbits and Cavies can only be removed from their cages for:
 - ✓ Showmanship practice
 - ✓ Grooming

- ✓ Cleaning of cages
 - ✓ Judging
 - ✓ Any other time requires permission from the species chair.
- No feed, feed bags, or supplies are to be left in the barn (everything must be stored at the campsite).
- Youth are responsible for keeping their cages and under their cage area clean all week.
- Animal Care Requirements:
 - **Animals shall be treated humanely at all times. Any reports of unethical, inhumane, and/or abusive treatment or actions that cause distress and/or suffering to an animal will be evaluated by the Species Chair, Fair Superintendent, Fair Veterinarian, and/or other appropriate individuals and may lead to disqualification and removal from all 4-H and Open Livestock Shows held at the fair.**
 - Youth are responsible for providing their own feeder, waterer, and enough feed for the week.
 - Be sure to label the feeder and waterer to identify who they belong too.
 - Youth are responsible for feeding, watering, and caring for their animal the **entire** week.
 - Water shall remain fresh and full at all times.
- Show Day Policies:
 - All animals will be judged by American Rabbit Breeders' Association (ARBA) standards.
 - NO bathing of rabbits or cavies is allowed at the Fair.
 - All animals must have had nails trimmed and be properly groomed before arriving at Fair.
 - Classes will be called 3 times only.
 - Any participant(s) not present will be dropped from the class
 - If youth are showing another 4-H animal, scheduling arrangements can be made with the species chair.
 - Show Attire:
 - ✓ Black Pants
 - ✓ White Shirt
 - ✓ Boots or Solid Shoes (no sandals allowed)
 - Optional:*
 - ✓ *White Lab Coat*
 - ✓ *Bola or Tie*
- Weather Conditions:
 - Cavies: If the weather is extremely cold or hot, all cavies MUST be taken to a home or camper during the night and returned to the barn the next morning.
 - The need for this will be determined by the species chair and superintendent
 - Extreme Heat:
 - ✓ Frozen water bottles and cold tiles will be provided
 - ✓ Bottles/Tiles can be placed in pens anytime after Noon and must be removed before 6pm each day
 - ✓ Youth are responsible for swapping their bottles/tiles as needed

to keep their animal cool.

- Barn Decorations:
 - Cages may not be altered in any way.
 - Must be in place by 6:00pm on the first Saturday of Fair.
 - Nothing may be permanently attached to the cages
 - All decorations should allow for air flow through and around the entire cage
 - Any decorations hindering air flow will be removed
 - This includes solid material or large, wooden signs placed on top of cages.
 - If you rabbit is a biter, be sure to be cage dividers.
- Barn Duty:
 - All participants in the barn must sign up for a 2-hour time slot.
 - ✓ Sign up is posted on the first Saturday of Fair
 - ✓ If youth fail to sign up, a time slot will be assigned to them
 - ✓ Come prepared to help and interact with the public.
 - ✓ Be courteous and polite.
 - ✓ Keep yourself and the barn neat and clean
 - ✓ Remember to smile!
- Skillathon:
 - Open to all rabbit and cavy 4-H youth
 - Teams of 6 from all age brackets will be randomly selected at Fair
 - Most questions are taken from the rabbit project and will include showmanship, ARBA, breed identification, etc.
 - Show attire is NOT required.
- Fair End Responsibilities:
 - All animals must be removed from the barn between 7:00am and 9:00am on the last Sunday of Fair.
 - Completely clean cage and are under cage.

After Fair Requirements

- Youth are required to turn in one completed record book (showmanship or market). If youth are exhibiting in market or in multiple species, you are required to complete the record book for your market project.
 - **Examples:** Jane shows beef cattle in showmanship and market; Jane completes a record book in beef cattle. John shows swine, horses, and goats, and markets his hog; John completes a record book for hogs. Sally shows chickens, rabbits, and dogs all showmanship only, and decides to complete the record book for rabbits.
- For market rabbit participants, a Thank You and 5 x 7 Auction photo must be given to your buyer and a copy of the thank you note is due at the October Livestock Council meeting.
- Failure to submit a completed, hard copy record book by the September Livestock Council meeting and a Thank You Note by the October meeting of the 4-H Livestock Council WILL result in suspension from the 4-H Livestock classes held during the NWMF Fair the following year. Suspended youth who complete their record book and submit it to the 4-H Livestock Council by the November meeting that same year will again be eligible to register for 4-H Livestock classes held during the NWMF Fair the following year.

Important Information & Tips for a Successful Rabbit or Cavy Project

- Fair Week Barn Essentials:
 - ✓ Wheelbarrow
 - ✓ Shovel
 - ✓ Rake
 - ✓ Feeder
 - ✓ Waterer
 - ✓ Water cans
 - ✓ Grooming items
 - ✓ Items for decorating – hammer, screws, nails, stapler, etc
- Helpful Terms:
 - Sex:
 - Rabbits: Buck (male) or Doe (female)
 - Cavy: Boar (male) or Sow (female)
 - Variety/Color: important to know the proper color term – ask for help if needed
 - Solid – white, black, chocolate, etc
 - Broken – 2 different distinct colors
 - Age:
 - Junior – younger than 6 months
 - Intermediate – Mature over 10 lbs. between 6 and 8 months
 - Senior:
 - Small animals – over 6 months of age
 - Large animals – over 10lbs. and older than 8 months

Cloverbuds

- 4-H members who are 5-7 years of age (as of January 1st of the current year)
- Cloverbuds must still register by the May deadline.
- The rabbit or cavy must be in the possession of the Cloverbud 4-H member (or under their care) by July 30th.
- Cloverbuds can participate only in 4-H Cloverbud Showmanship which is held on Friday of Fair Week.
 - Cloverbuds may not participate in breed or market classes.
- Cloverbuds must have direct one-to-one adult assistance while showing their animal.
 - The Adult may be a parent, guardian, or current Gold 4-H volunteer.
 - The adult is to stand behind or very near the Cloverbud during the show.
 - The adult is not to talk to or assist the Cloverbud; if help is needed, the evaluator will ask for it.
- All Cloverbud shows are non-competitive; each member will receive recognition.
- Cloverbuds must follow all rules laid out for the older 4-H members in the barn.
 - They will complete their own chores.
 - Parents, guardians, older siblings, or another 4-H member may assist.

Resources

- Northwest Michigan 4-H Livestock Council's website:
www.northwestmichiganlivestock.org
- *Rabbit Resource Handbook for Breeding, Market, and Pet Rabbit Projects*, Ohio State University Extension; 4-H Circular 228R
- Rabbit Learning Lab Kit, Ohio State University Extension – borrow from the Grand Traverse MSU Extension Office
- Resources and educational workshops offered by MSU Extension and Michigan 4-H